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PRESS RELEASE

ED Requires K-12 School Districts to Certify Compliance with Title VI and Students v. Harvard as a Condition of Receiving Federal Financial Assistance

APRIL 3, 2025

Today, the U.S. Department of Education sent letters to State Commissioners overseeing K-12 State Education Agencies (SEAs) requiring them to certify their compliance with their antidiscrimination obligations in order to continue receiving federal financial assistance. Specifically, the Department requests certification of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the responsibilities outlined in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*.

"Federal financial assistance is a privilege, not a right. When state education commissioners accept federal funds, they agree to abide by federal antidiscrimination requirements. Unfortunately, we have seen too many schools flout or outright violate these obligations, including by using DEI programs to discriminate against one group of Americans to favor another based on identity characteristics in clear violation of Title VI," **said Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Craig Trainor**. "Today, the Department is taking an important step toward ensuring that states understand—and comply with—their existing obligations under civil rights laws and *Students v. Harvard*. As Chief Justice Roberts wrote, 'Eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it.' No student should be denied opportunities or treated differently because of his or her race. We hope all State and Local

Education Agencies agree and certify their compliance with this legal and constitutional principle.”

SEAs will be responsible for reporting on their state overall and for collecting certification responses from their Local Education Agencies (LEAs). SEAs will have 10 days to sign and return [the certification](#).

Background:

These certifications are being sent out pursuant to the Department of Education’s authority and responsibility to ensure that recipients of federal funding are complying with United States civil rights law.

On February 14, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued a [Dear College Letter](#) (DCL) to educational institutions receiving federal funds notifying them that they must cease using race preferences and stereotypes as a factor in their admissions, hiring, promotion, scholarship, prizes, administrative support, sanctions, discipline, and other programs and activities. Two weeks later, OCR published [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to anticipate and answer questions that may arise in response to the DCL.

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